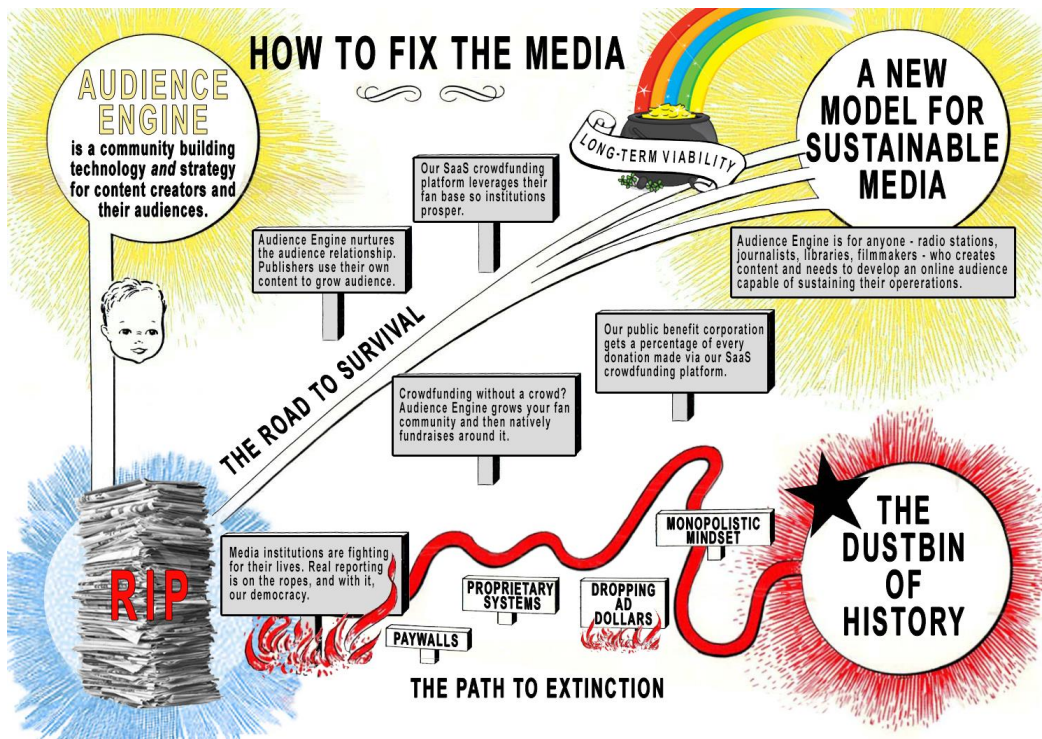July 27th, 2015
For immediate release

Independent Radio Legend WFMU Teams with Leading Software Developer Bocoup to create Audience Engine, a New Digital Platform to Make Independent and Public Media Sustainable

$100,000 Grant from Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Completes First Round of Private Investment ($200,000)

JERSEY CITY, NJ — WFMU, the New Jersey-based independent public radio powerhouse, today announced a $100,000 grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge

Foundation in support of [Audience Engine](), the station's innovative new audience development and fundraising software.

WFMU has teamed with Bocoup, a leading software developer based in Boston, to create Audience Engine, a publishing tool built to empower media institutions to broadcast, publish and fundraise effectively in the digital age, while building stronger, larger communities and fostering more substantive relationships with their constituencies.

Through its subsidiary Congera, WFMU will make the new open source digital platform available for free to public broadcasters and to print and digital news organizations. Congera will also offer inexpensive hosting services for content makers who prefer an off-the-shelf, hosted alternative for the Audience Engine platform. Congera also secured its first round of private investment for its hosting venture, raising $195,000 from a handful of private investors.

The Dodge Foundation, which with this grant has now contributed a cumulative total of $500,000 to the project, has a special interest in developing sustainable models for journalism in the digital era. "The Audience Engine has great potential to revolutionize how media publishers operate in the digital world," said Chris Daggett, Dodge Foundation President and CEO. "It is an effective and innovative publishing and community engagement tool that not only strengthens the relationship between news operations and their readers but also, we hope, generates a new and much-needed community-based revenue source to support quality journalism." "We've built amazing crowdfunding and community building tools at WFMU, which have kept WFMU alive," said Ken Freedman, Audience Engine Founder. "Over 70% of our donations arrive from our website and related apps. By building tools for an independent public radio station though, I think we've found tools and strategies that can really help sustain and serve all sorts of digital content makers – online investigative reporters, podcasters, filmmakers, libraries, academics, galleries, photographers, bands. All these content makers are grappling with the same issues these days – how to distribute content online, how to engage people online, and how to keep the lights on."

The Dodge Foundation was an early supporter of the Audience Engine, which was developed by WFMU based on tools it uses on its own website. The latest grant approved at the Board's June 15 meeting brings the total amount the Foundation has invested in the platform to $500,000. A key component of Audience Engine's design is the interactive second screen, where readers and listeners assemble to discuss a particular broadcast, article or news report. Ordinarily, second screen communities comment and exchange opinions on third party platforms like Twitter and Reddit. The problem for the content producer is that when they send their audiences to off-site destinations, these giant data mining operations skim off critical information that should be the lifeblood of the digital producer - information that should be sustaining the artist or producer, not the big data enterprises.

Deployment of Audience Engine will not be limited to particular networks (such as NPR) because the platform's flexible design can be adapted to a diverse range of users. Audience Engine's modular structure means that content producers will be able to incorporate its tools into their existing platforms, rather than having to abandon one system for another.

The $100,000 Dodge grant enables WFMU to host an Audience Engine launch event this fall and roll out training workshops for early adopters of the tool.

"WFMU is a remarkably innovative radio station, with a long list of technological firsts, and a strong commitment to freely sharing their content," said Molly de Aguiar, Dodge Media Program Director. "The main point of the Audience Engine, which dovetails so clearly with the rest of Dodge Foundation local journalism work, is that media organizations have to stop building platforms for specific content, and start building platforms that put community first."

Early adopters of Audience Engine may include not only WFMU, but New Orleans' legendary jazz and blues station WWOZ, as well as WSOU, Princeton's WPRB and Seattle's fabled KEXP. Audience Engine's fundraising tool Mynte will be released at a launch event in New York City in October, where content makers and coders worldwide will be invited to customize and create on the Audience Engine platform.

About the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation:

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation was established in 1974 through the foresight and generosity of Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge, daughter of William and Almira Rockefeller. For more than 40 years, Dodge has supported leadership, collaboration and innovation, with a focus on addressing the issues most pressing to New Jersey. Dodge also offers a comprehensive technical assistance program geared towards strengthening the capacity of New Jersey's nonprofit community.

About WFMU:

WFMU-FM is a listener-supported, non-commercial radio station broadcasting at 91.1 Mhz FM in Jersey City, NJ, right across the Hudson from lower Manhattan. It is currently the longest running freeform radio station in the United States. The station also broadcasts to the Hudson Valley and Lower Catskills in New York, Western New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania via its 90.1 FM signal in Mount Hope, NY, and to Rockland County, NY at 91.9FM. The station maintains an extensive online presence at WFMU.ORG which includes live audio streaming in several formats, immense audio archives, podcasts and a popular blog.

Rolling Stone Magazine, The Village Voice and CMJ, amongst others, have all at one time or another called WFMU "the best radio station in the country" and the station has also been the subject of feature stories in The New York Times and on the BBC. In recent years the station has gained a large international following due its online

operations and counts Simpson's creator Matt Groening, film director Jim Jarmusch and Velvet Underground founder Lou Reed, among others, as devoted fans of the station. WFMU's programming ranges from flat-out uncategorizable strangeness to rock and roll, experimental music, 78 RPM Records, jazz, psychedelia, hip-hop, electronica, hand-cranked wax cylinders, punk rock, gospel, exotica, R&B, radio improvisation, cooking instructions, classic radio airchecks, found sound, dopey call-in shows, interviews with obscure radio personalities and notable science-world luminaries, spoken word collages, Andrew Lloyd Webber soundtracks in languages other than English as well as Country and western music.

All of the station's programming is controlled by individual DJs and is not beholden to any type of station-wide playlist or rotation schedule. Experimentation, spontaneity and humor are among the station's most frequently noted distinguishing traits. WFMU does not belong to any existing public radio network, and close to 100% of its programming originates at the station.

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